



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/869,094	09/18/2001	Gervasio Mercuri	2217/50147	1011

23911 7590 11/19/2003  
CROWELL & MORING LLP  
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY GROUP  
P.O. BOX 14300  
WASHINGTON, DC 20044-4300

EXAMINER

SIMONE, CATHERINE A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1772

DATE MAILED: 11/19/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/869,094

Applicant(s)

MERCURI, GERVASIO

Examiner

Catherine Simone

Art Unit

1772

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 45-66 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 45-66 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Repeated Rejections*

1. The 35 U.S.C. 102 rejection of claims 45-47, 54-57 and 63-66 as anticipated by Levin is repeated for the reasons previously of record in Paper #17, Pages 2-4, Paragraph #4.
2. The 35 U.S.C. 103 rejection of claims 48-52 and 58 over Levin in view of Mercuri is repeated for the reasons previously of record in Paper #17, Pages 4-5, Paragraph #6.
3. The 35 U.S.C. 103 rejection of claims 53 and 59-62 over Levin in view of Mercuri and in view of Mintz is repeated for the reasons previously of record in Paper #17, Pages 5-6, Paragraph #7.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112*

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

5. Claims 45-66 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The recitation "a limited number of turns" in claim 45 is deemed vague and indefinite. What do you mean by "a limited number"? The term "limited" is a relative term. It could mean any number. Clarification is requested.

Claim 55 recites the limitation "said first tubular portion" in lines 2 and 3. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

*New Rejections*

*Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. **Claims 45-47, 54-57 and 63-66** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Krauss et al. (3,248,905).

Krauss et al. discloses a tubular casing structure for use with food products (see col. 1, lines 28-31), comprising circumferential threads extending around a periphery of a tubular casing and spaced at intervals along the tubular casing (Fig. 1, #13), the circumferential threads comprising an elastic thread (Fig. 4, #22) in combination with a yarn (Fig. 4, #28) wrapped around and along a length of the elastic thread (Fig. 4, #22), wherein a limited number of turns of the yarn (Fig. 4, #28) are provided around the elastic thread (Fig. 4, #22) for a given length of the circumferential threads (see col. 2, lines 1-6; also see Figs. 1 and 4, #13.) so that the circumferential threads become taut after a predetermined amount of stretch due to the yarn being straightened to an extent where the yarn resists tensile force whereupon the circumferential threads become inextensible. Regarding **claim 46**, note a knitted tube with the circumferential threads attached to the knitted tube (Fig. 1, #10; also see col. 2, lines 27-30). Regarding **claim 47**, the tubular casing is a tubular net comprising radially spaced longitudinal threads (Fig. 1, #12) in combination with the circumferential threads (Fig. 1, #13) and wherein the circumferential threads comprise a continuous thread extending spirally along said tubular casing

Art Unit: 1772

(Fig. 4, #28), the longitudinal threads comprise interlocking loop stitches (Fig. 2, #16, #18 and #20), each loop stitch extending between the circumferential threads (Fig. 2, #13). Regarding **claim 54**, note the tubular casing is a knitted tube (Fig. 1, #10) that is stretchable and impermeable to the food products and longitudinal threads (Fig. 1, #12) in combination with the circumferential threads (Fig. 1, #13), the circumferential (Fig. 1, #13) and longitudinal threads (Fig. 1, #12) secured to and spaced, respectively, along and around the knitted tube (Fig. 1, #10), being stretchable after the circumferential threads become taut. Regarding **claim 55**, the circumferential (Fig. 1, #13) and longitudinal threads (Fig. 1, #12) are secured to the first tubular portion during knitting of the first tubular portion. Regarding **claim 56 and 63**, the circumferential threads (Fig. 1, #13) are secured to the knitted tube so as to form a continuous spiral along the knitted tube. Regarding **claim 57, 64, 65 and 66**, the circumferential (Fig. 1, #13) and longitudinal (Fig. 1, #12) threads are secured to an outer surface of the knitted tube.

9. **Claims 48-52 and 58** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Krauss et al (3,248,905) in view of Mercuri (5,712,007).

Krauss et al. discloses a tubular casing structure for use with food products (see col. 1, lines 28-31), comprising circumferential threads extending around a periphery of a tubular casing and spaced at intervals along the tubular casing (Fig. 1, #13), the circumferential threads comprising an elastic thread (Fig. 4, #22) in combination with a yarn (Fig. 4, #28) wrapped around and along a length of the elastic thread (Fig. 4, #22). However, Krauss et al. fails to disclose a tubular fibrous casing located within and co-extensive with the tubular net, the fibrous casing comprising an inner liner for the tubular net. Mercuri teaches it is old and well-known in the art to have a tubular fibrous casing located within and co-extensive with a tubular net, the

Art Unit: 1772

fibrous casing comprising an inner liner for the tubular net (see col. 4, lines 63-65) for the purpose of producing a tubular casing for food products.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the applicant's invention was made to have provided a tubular fibrous casing located within and co-extensive with the tubular net in Krauss et al as suggested by Mercuri in order to produce a tubular casing for food products.

Regarding **claim 49**, the circumferential threads become taut at a diameter which is substantially equal to the diameter of the tubular fibrous casing when it is filled (see col. 3, lines 52-63). Regarding **claim 50**, the diameter of the tubular fibrous casing is greater than the diameter of the tubular net prior to stretching of the circumferential threads so that the circumferential threads apply compressive force to the fibrous casing as it is being filled (see col. 3, lines 39-50). Regarding **claim 51**, the diameter of the fibrous casing is between 2 and 4 times greater than the diameter of the tubular net prior to stretching of the circumferential threads (see col. 4, lines 6-10). Regarding **claims 52 and 58**, the diameter of the tubular net when the circumferential threads become taut is smaller than the diameter of the fibrous casing so that the circumferential and longitudinal threads press inwardly against the fibrous casing (see col. 3, lines 1-9).

10. **Claims 53 and 59-62** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Krauss et al. (3,248,905) in view of Mercuri (5,712,007) and in view of Mintz (5,855,231).

Krauss et al. discloses a tubular casing structure for use with food products (see col. 1, lines 28-31), comprising circumferential threads extending around a periphery of a tubular casing and spaced at intervals along the tubular casing (Fig. 1, #13), the circumferential threads

Art Unit: 1772

comprising an elastic thread (Fig. 4, #22) in combination with a yarn (Fig. 4, #28) wrapped around and along a length of the elastic thread (Fig. 4, #22). However, Krauss et al fails to disclose a tubular fibrous casing located within and co-extensive with the tubular net, the fibrous casing comprising an inner liner for the tubular net. Mercuri teaches it is old and well-known in the analogous art to have a tubular fibrous casing located within and co-extensive with a tubular net, the fibrous casing comprising an inner liner for the tubular net (see col. 4, lines 63-65) for the purpose of producing a tubular casing for food products. However, Mercuri fails to disclose the tubular fibrous casing having at least one pleat. Mintz teaches in the analogous art a fibrous casing having at least one pleat (Fig. 7, #44) for the purpose of locating the fibrous casing within the tubular net.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the applicant's invention was made to have provided a fibrous casing folded flat with at least one pleat in Krauss et al as suggested by both Mercuri and Mintz in order to produce a tubular casing for food products.

### ***Response to Arguments***

11. Applicant's arguments filed September 8, 2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that "there is no indication in Levin and particularly at column 3, lines 21 to 31 concerning limiting the number of turns of yarn for a given length of elastic thread." However, it is to be pointed out that Levin teaches a number of turns of yarn (Fig. 5, #12c and #12d) for a given length of elastic thread (Fig. 5, #12b). Therefore, Levin still reads on the claimed "limited number of turns of yarn for a given length of elastic thread", since the

Art Unit: 1772

limited number of turns is unclear to how many turns are limited. A "limited" number could be any number.


*Conclusion*


12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Catherine Simone whose telephone number is (703)605-4297.

The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon can be reached on (703) 308-4251. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9311.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

  
Catherine Simone  
Examiner  
Art Unit 1772  
November 13, 2003

  
HAROLD PYON  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
1772

11/19/03